

Naval Air Facility (NAF) El Centro's new Combined Child Care and Youth Center Facility

NAF El Centro, CA, August 12, 2010 – After 28 years in a “temporary” facility, Naval Air Facility (NAF) El Centro's new Combined Child Care and Youth Center Facility officially opened today. A critical component in the services provided to the installation, this facility provides the team at NAF El Centro the peace of mind that their children are well cared for when they are executing the command's mission. Katrina Portwood, Child and Youth Programs Director and twenty-nine year employee of the facility expressed it best when she said, “This facility is a dream come true. A place for our children to live and love and learn...what more could we ask for?”

The \$8.5 million center features a reception lobby area, offices, training rooms for caregivers and instructors, full kitchen, laundry, quiet and activity rooms, computer rooms, snack bar, youth lounge as well as outdoor recreation areas equipped with age-appropriate toys and play equipment. Additionally, the single-story 12,077 square-foot facility incorporates several water and energy saving initiatives, indoor environmental quality measures and sustainable site features that meet the standards for Gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

The most popular components of the new facility, according to the school age children, are the on-site splash pad and the full misting system on the playgrounds, an integral component when summer temperatures regularly exceed 110 degrees. According to 8-year-old Parker, his favorite aspect of the center is that “the atmosphere is more relaxing.”

Petty Officer Second Class Melissa Crowe, who has two children enrolled in the program, spoke at the ceremony and told the 250 plus gathered in the multi-purpose room that “without the Child and Youth program, there is no way we'd be able to fully focus on our occupations. On a larger scale, this programs allows us deploy without the worry of where, when and who is going to take care of our children. It even simply allows us to suture that laceration, tighten that F-18 engine screw or inspect and repair ordnance systems. We owe a million thank-yous and hugs to all personnel involved in this project. Thank-you to all of the personnel constantly battling to keep this project in the books, thank-you to the construction workers for doing such a tremendous job and thank-you to the staff and all the parents who have supported this evolution. “

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